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Integrating Local Culture in Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles: A Study on Cultural Literacy and Citizenship in Langsa City Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the index of cultural and civic literacy among elementary school students in Langsa City, one of the most multicultural areas in Aceh Province, Indonesia. Using a mixed-methods, sequential, explanatory design, the research combined quantitative analysis of electronic education reports (e-raports) with qualitative exploration through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The quantitative findings revealed that of the four sample schools, two were categorised as moderate (yellow) and two as low (red), with an average index of 61.94%. These results indicate that students' mastery of cultural and civic literacy remains relatively low. The qualitative analysis highlighted several constraints in implementing the **Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)**, including limited teacher training, a lack of thematic modules, and insufficient integration of local culture into learning activities. Schools predominantly adopted themes such as Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Lifestyle, while essential themes related to multicultural values, such as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and *Build Body and Soul*, were not implemented. This study emphasises that, despite Langsa's rich cultural diversity, schools have yet to leverage local wisdom as a learning resource fully. The findings contribute to the discourse on cultural literacy by revealing paradoxes in multicultural contexts and provide practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and local stakeholders to strengthen cultural and civic literacy as a foundation for social cohesion and national identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

To strengthen the nation, cultural and civic literacy is a high priority in Indonesia, a country home to hundreds of ethnic groups and their distinct cultures [1]. When more Indonesians are culturally and civically literate, they will be better able to comprehend and

engage with Indonesian culture as a national identity, which, in turn, will help build a multicultural society in Indonesia that values diversity and inclusion [2]. Multicultural societies with low mastery of cultural and civic literacy are at risk of cultural and social disintegration, even in crisis conditions, leading to discrimination, hostility, and social division. Countries with internally divided societies will certainly be a threat to national peace [3].

According to UNESCO, cultural and civic literacy are important competencies for building inclusive societies, including an understanding of one's own and others' cultural values, norms, and practices, **the ability to communicate across cultures**, and tolerance of differences. In contrast, civic literacy emphasises active participation, awareness of rights and obligations, and commitment to democracy and social justice [4]. Correspondingly, the OECD (2018) asserts that global competence should include the ability to understand others' perspectives, awareness of global and local issues, and social engagement in responsible collective action. In Indonesia [5], **the Ministry of Education and Culture** Kemdikbud (2017), through **the National Literacy Movement**, also formulated cultural and civic literacy indicators that emphasise the recognition, appreciation, and preservation of culture, along with an understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens, participation in social life, and attitudes of tolerance and cooperation. These three views show that cultural and civic literacy is not only about knowledge but also about skills and attitudes that support harmonious living in a pluralistic society [6].

The results of the Asian cultural influence index survey by the Lowry Institute also show that Indonesia's position remains very low, at 14.2%, even though Indonesia is a country with the most cultural diversity [7]. Based on previous research, data from the cultural literacy scale index across several regions of Indonesia also indicate that students' cultural and civic literacy in elementary schools is relatively low [8]. How can we develop cultural existence abroad if knowledge of local culture is low? If this continues, it is likely that our local culture will become extinct [9].

Local culture is one of the basic capitals that is highly strategic for internalising the value of global diversity for cultural literacy and citizenship in a region, especially among students in elementary schools [10]. Children between the ages of six and eleven are considered to be at the concrete operational level **of cognitive development, according to Jean Piaget's theory of child development**, where children begin to show conservation abilities (number, area, volume, orientation) [11]. Although children can solve problems logically, they cannot yet think abstractly or hypothetically. This is also supported by contextual theory, which views human psychological development as a process shaped by reciprocal transactions between a person and the physical, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the interaction occurs. Therefore, the content that serves as a learning resource for elementary school children is highly recommended to be concrete and contextual.

Based on the explanation above, local culture is a valuable asset that can serve **as a means of** internalising **the value of the Pancasila student profile**, especially the value of global diversity in improving students' cultural literacy and citizenship in primary schools [12]. **"The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)" is an initiative of the**

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Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, Technology, and Higher Education that helps students in elementary, junior high, and high school develop the skills outlined in the “Pancasila Student Profile” through interdisciplinary, co-curricular learning experiences that focus on analysing real-world problems and developing creative solutions. It is believed that students will gain personal experiences through this P5 activity program that will help them strengthen values such as faith and devotion to God Almighty, diversity in the world, working together, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. The Pancasila Learner Profile Project has 7 main themes that all education units, including primary education levels, can select. Each education unit then develops these themes.

The implementation of cultural and civic literacy development in schools certainly has differences in its success. Langsa City is the most multicultural area in Aceh Province, located in a densely populated coastal region. Based on preliminary observations made by researchers at Langsa City Elementary School, namely, schools that are members of the Mover School Program. The diversity of students' cultural backgrounds is evident: 6 tribes, including Acehnese, Javanese, Gayo, Chinese, Batak, Tamiang Malay, and others. This creates a multicultural learning environment; however, technological advances drive unstoppable external socio-cultural globalisation, leading some to fear cultural homogenization. Cultural homogenization is the loss of local cultural diversity and the emergence of global cultural uniformity due to the widespread influence of the dominant culture. This condition certainly presents its own challenges, especially in strengthening cultural and civic literacy, which makes it very important to instil in students, not only to maintain cultural identity, but also to support the achievement of the “Pancasila Student Profile”, which emphasises noble values, tolerance, and social awareness to achieve peace in society.

In line with that, the goal of introducing the Merdeka Curriculum into Indonesian classrooms is to improve teaching and learning nationwide. In order to create a new generation of leaders capable of overcoming any obstacle to human progress, based on the principles espoused by the “Pancasila Student Profile”, an autonomous curriculum is necessary [13]. In order for students to fully grasp cultural and civic literacy through the “Pancasila Student Profile project program”, they must fully embrace global diversity, which is one of the key values in the profile [14]

The quality of the school's global diversity profile will be reflected in the results of the Electronic Education Report Card through the Cultural and Civic Literacy Indicator in Primary Schools. Every year, the school or education unit will receive an e-report from the Ministry of Education and Culture via the school account as a reflection on improving future education quality. This is a strategic step for elementary education units to know the quality of the school. Given that Langsa is one of the cities in Aceh province with the most diverse society among other regions, researchers are interested in mapping the cultural and civic literacy index of students in Langsa City through the analysis of school education e-report data and reviewing the implementation of the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students (P5) as a basis for developing sustainable programs to strengthen cultural and civic literacy in Langsa City in subsequent research.

Culturally integrated learning can be a strategic means to shape the character of young people who are rooted in local culture while ready to face diverse social dynamics. However, until now, there has been no mapping of the cultural literacy index and review of the use of local culture in elementary schools in the “Pancasila Student Profile project program.” This is very important to know as a reflection of the program's effectiveness and, of course, can be used as a basis for further program follow-up, especially to strengthen cultural literacy and citizenship. This study intends to investigate data from elementary school cultural literacy and citizenship indices, in light of the above description, to ascertain the presence of local cultural values.

Based on the background of the problems described above, the general problem formulations in this study are. “How is the cultural and civic literacy index based on the results of the education e-report card in the Merdeka curriculum in the domain of global diversity of students in Langsa City elementary schools?” and “How is the Utilization of Cultural Potential and Local Wisdom in Langsa City Elementary Schools in the Pancasila student profile project program (P5)?” Starting with the problem statement, this study aims “to determine the cultural and civic literacy index of elementary school students and to determine whether or not there is a utilization of local culture and wisdom in elementary schools in Langsa City, especially in elementary schools graduating from the driving school program in Langsa City.” The benefit of this research is that it serves as a basis for the development of a program to strengthen cultural literacy and sustainable citizenship in further research.

2. METHOD

This study used a sequential explanatory model, a mixed-methods strategy that sequentially integrates qualitative and quantitative data. The first step is to analyse the data quantitatively from the education e-report card, which measures the cultural and civic literacy of primary school kids regarding diversity in the world. In the second phase, we will conduct in-depth qualitative interviews, document reviews, and observations to understand how the “Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)” uses local cultural resources. This design was chosen to provide a comprehensive picture of the levels of cultural and civic literacy, as well as the contextual practice of using local culture in schools.

The research was conducted in Langsa City Elementary Schools that implemented the Merdeka Curriculum Pilot. The research subjects include quantitative data, namely all elementary schools that have graduated from the Mover School program in Langsa City, totaling 4 schools, 4 principals, 4 teachers in charge of the “Pancasila student profile project program”, 4 students in each school and supporting document data for each school including school education e-raport documents in 2024, project module documents for the “Pancasila Student Profile” (P5) in 2024, reports on the results of activities to strengthen the “Pancasila Student Profile” project in 2024. Qualitative data: teachers, principals, and students in driving schools selected by purposive sampling, with consideration of active involvement in the implementation of the “Pancasila Student Profile Project (P5).”

Data collection techniques in this study are: a) Documentation (collecting secondary data in the form of education e-report results on cultural and civic literacy indicators, modules, and results of P5 activities). b) Semi-structured interviews conducted with principals, teachers, and students to explore the utilisation of local culture in P5, and c) Participatory observation, namely observing planning documents, project modules, and reports on P5 activities in schools to examine the presence or absence of integration of local cultural values in learning.

Quantitative data analysis techniques include e-report data analysed using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data analysis was conducted by referring to the Ministry of Education's e-report card categories, colour-coded as **red** (low, <65%), **yellow** (medium, 66%-80%), and **green** (high, >81%). This coding system was used to map students' cultural and civic literacy achievements across primary schools. Researchers also used qualitative analytic methods, reducing, presenting, and verifying data using the Miles & Huberman interactive model. This model was applied to data collected through interviews, observations, and documents. Furthermore, quantitative and qualitative data findings were integrated to explain the level of cultural literacy, as well as to review the utilisation of local culture in the P5 project. For qualitative data, validity is obtained through triangulation. In this study, **triangulation of methods** was used, namely by comparing the results of quantitative (education e-report data) and qualitative (interviews, observations, documentation) analysis. Quantitative data were used to map students' levels of cultural and civic literacy, while qualitative data were used to explore the context of P5 implementation and the use of local culture in schools. The triangulation process involved matching and identifying differences between quantitative and qualitative data to obtain a more comprehensive, valid, and in-depth understanding of students' cultural and civic literacy in Langsa City.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Cultural and Civic Literacy Index

Based on the review of education e-raport documents in 2023 and the results of interviews with four primary schools in Langsa City, the data showed that two schools were in the yellow category and two in the red category. The average value of the multicultural students' cultural and civic literacy index based on the national e-raport obtained 61.94%, with details: Sample 1 scored 68.42%, Sample 2 72.93%, Sample 3 62.48%, and Sample 4 58.83%.

Table 1. Percentage of Cultural Literacy Index in education units

No	School	Score (%)	Category
1	Sample 1	68,42	Yellow
2	Sample 2	72,93	Yellow
3	Sample 3	62,48	Red
4	Sample 4	58,83	Red
	Average	61,94%	Red

The following table presents the percentage of cultural and civic literacy index in education units in the form of a graph:

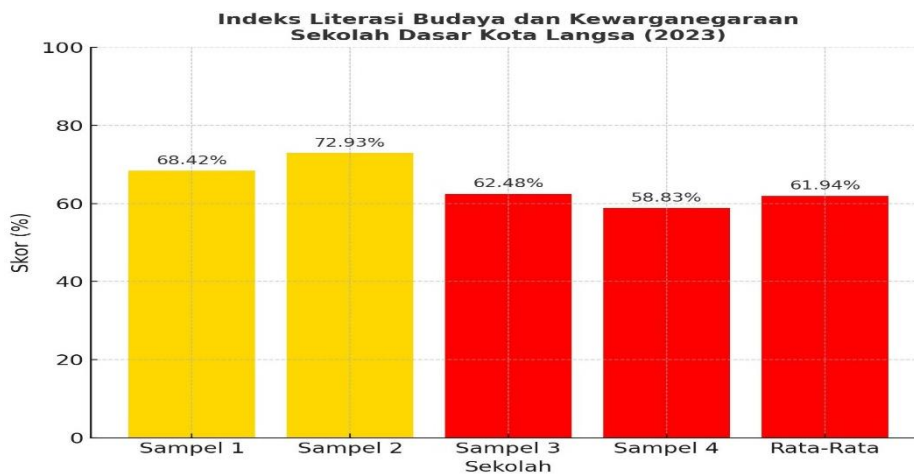


Figure 1. Cultural and Civic Literacy Index of Education Units

These results show that students' cultural and civic literacy achievements remain low to moderate. Schools in the yellow category indicate that most students meet only the minimum standards, while schools in the red category indicate a more serious condition in which the basic indicators of cultural and civic literacy are not well met. Thus, it can be concluded that achieving cultural literacy in Langsa City primary schools still requires evaluation and intervention, especially in strengthening local wisdom and building national character. This qualitative data is also supported by teacher interviews, which confirm that the limitations of learning media and the lack of innovation in integrating cultural values are the main causes of students' low cultural literacy scores.

Implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Project Program (P5)

In addition to quantitative data on cultural literacy achievements, this study also examined the implementation of the "Pancasila Student Profile Project Program (P5)." Of the six P5 themes available, schools tend to select only *Local Wisdom*, *Entrepreneurship*, and *Sustainable Lifestyle*. Other very important themes, such as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and *Bangunlah Jiwa Raga*, have not been implemented at all. The following are the results of data mapping obtained from project module documents and P5 implementation reports, as well as support from teacher and student interview data (Table 2).

Several key facts regarding the project's implementation and background were revealed through interviews with four teachers in charge of the program to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students in four schools. One of these facts is that the theme of *bhinneka Tunggal ika*, which aims to build the soul, body, and local wisdom by touching on content related to cultural and civic literacy, has not been implemented. First, time constraints are the dominant factor because teachers are more focused on meeting core curriculum targets. Secondly, the absence of thematic modules that support the theme of cultural and civic literacy makes it difficult for teachers to design appropriate learning. Thirdly, the lack of teacher training in integrating culture into learning adds to the field's technical obstacles.

Finally, the lack of evenly distributed training from the local government to equip all teachers responsible for the project leaves schools without the structural support to implement P5 themes related to culture. Based on interviews with students, it was also found that they had never learned about cultural and civic literacy. Thus, this field data shows that the implementation of P5 in Langsa City is still far from optimal, especially in instilling the values of diversity, physical and spiritual health, and the spirit of nationalism.

Table 2. Project module documents and P5 implementation

No	Object	Project Theme	Year of Activity	Program Activity
1	Sample 1	1. Sustainable Lifestyle 2. Entrepreneurship	2022	- growing medicinal rhizome plants - making banana chips
2	Sample 2	1. Sustainable Lifestyle 2. Entrepreneurship	2022	- Growing fresh vegetables in the schoolyard - making foot mats and patchwork
3	Example 3	1. Local Wisdom 2. Entrepreneurship	2022	- Making fish preservatives with sunti acid - Manufacture of kits (shoe smear / car and motorcycle polishers from waste cooking oil)
4	Example 4	1. Local Wisdom 2. Entrepreneurship	2022	- Making broomsticks and placemats from coconut fronds - Shell waste into decoration and door curtain

3.2. Discussion

The research results, which place Langsa at an average score of 61.94%, show a significant gap compared to more progressive regions. The application of culture-based local content has been proven to significantly increase students' awareness of national traditions and identity in Yogyakarta [15]. Likewise, integrating local culture into the curriculum in Bali resulted in broader, more harmonious cross-cultural understanding [16]. Research also indicates that integrating local cultural knowledge into teaching not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also enhances engagement and classroom participation in multicultural settings [17].

When compared to these regions, Langsa City appears to be lagging. Teachers' limitations largely influence the low index of achievement in incorporating local cultural values into classroom learning. This reflects a structural gap in regional education policy, where culture has not yet been positioned as a central foundation of the learning process. In other words, Langsa remains vulnerable in terms of cultural literacy, and without targeted interventions, the gap may widen further. International studies have shown that school programs that explicitly integrate cultural literacy into core curricula significantly improve students' intercultural competence and tolerance, especially in diverse classrooms [18].

The findings also indicate that several important P5 themes, such as *Unity in Diversity* and *Build the Spirit of the Body*, have not been optimally implemented in primary schools in Langsa City. In West Java, the Local Wisdom theme was prioritised because it proved effective in strengthening students' national identity [19]. Similarly, the implementation of the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* theme in Central Java significantly increased students' tolerance in multicultural environments [20]. However, the absence of these

themes in Langsa's curriculum may be contributing to weaker character outcomes. Cross-national research further suggests that curricular strategies emphasising local heritage and awareness of diversity help students develop respect for pluralistic values and democratic participation [21].

These differences suggest that the challenges in Langsa are not merely technical but also structural. Teachers are not only limited to participating in training programs but also face constraints regarding teaching modules and ideas for integrating cultural values into project-based learning content. Consequently, the implementation of P5 in Langsa remains partial and has not fully addressed its essential purpose—character development rooted in culture and national identity.

Previous studies have consistently emphasised the importance of cultural literacy as a foundation for national character-building. Schools that integrated local culture into the curriculum increased students' pride in their national identity [22]. Culture-based learning has also been shown to strengthen students' collaborative skills in navigating diversity [23]. However, this study reveals a critical gap. Despite being a multicultural region, Langsa City has not fully integrated cultural diversity into its curriculum. This creates a paradox: although the region possesses rich cultural diversity, schools have not effectively transformed this diversity into a meaningful learning resource. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature on cultural literacy by presenting empirical evidence from a multicultural context where cultural policy implementation remains weak.

The low level of cultural literacy in Langsa has implications not only for education but also for broader social cohesion. Field data indicate that students are more familiar with global popular culture than with local traditions, rarely use local languages, and show limited appreciation for local cultural practices. Low cultural literacy has been associated with an increased risk of identity conflict [24]. In contrast, strengthening cultural literacy has been shown to enhance social solidarity among students in multiethnic communities [25].

Thus, this research confirms that cultural literacy is not merely an additional aspect of education but a key strategy for preventing social disintegration. Cultural literacy should be prioritised in educational policy, especially in areas with high levels of multiculturalism, such as Langsa. This is important so that schools do not function only as centres of cognitive learning, but also as agents of social integration and the maintenance of harmony in society.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the cultural literacy of elementary school students in Langsa City remains at a low to moderate level, and it needs to be strengthened immediately to serve as the foundation for the younger generation's character and social cohesion. For this reason, local governments need to strengthen policies, schools need to develop P5 project programs based on local wisdom and global diversity to build body and soul, and teachers also need intensive training to integrate cultural values into learning and P5 themes. In addition, concrete steps such as pilot projects, the development of culture-based co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and collaboration with local communities can be effective strategies to improve conditions. This research contributes to enriching the literature on the challenges of cultural literacy in multicultural contexts and provides practical guidance for

education policymakers and practitioners to improve the quality of culture-based education in Indonesia.

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